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SOVIET SECRET POLICE PURGE:

Shakeup Of KGB Impending

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NEW YORK — The KGB is in trouble again. Russia's secret police agency has had another spell of bad luck in recent months, as a result of a new purge is reported to be brewing in the Kremlin.

Semichastny Ousted

A curt statement printed in Moscow's Pravda in May announced that Vladimir Semichastny, a former leader of the Young Communist League (Komsomol), lost his job as chief of the KGB and "transferred to other work." He was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, a burly man of 52, who is (or was then) a friend and close associate of Leonid Brezhnev, head of the Russian Communist party.

Now, according to East European Communists, Andropov is also in trouble and probably on his way out.

The removal of Semichastny in May was obviously related to the struggle for power between his patron and mentor, Alexander Shelepin, and Brezhnev. But the Kremlin, it seems, also held Semichastny responsible for the death of Maj. Gen. Lukshin, a senior officer of the KGB.

An unprecedented official statement by the Kremlin revealed only that Lukshin "died tragically in the course of his duties." However, East European Communists insisted that he was killed near Khabarovsk, less than 50 miles from Red China, in a battle with Mao Tse-tung's secret agents.

They recalled that the decline of Shelepin, Semichastny's predecessor in the KGB, coincided with the assassination of another high-ranking officer of the secret police, Maj. Gen. Georgy Naimushin, who was also reported to have died "while carrying out his service duties."

Khrushchev Appointees

The demotion of the "young Turks" — Shelepin, Semichastny and a third top official of the KGB, V. S. Tikunov — marked the end of the Komsomol's control of Russia's secret police. All three were appointed to their jobs by Nikita Khrushchev while they were still members of the Young Communist League.

There is no doubt that the young Turks were better politicians than officials of the secret police. During their rule of the KGB, the United States CIA managed to secure the co-operation of Col. Oleg Penkovsky, a top Russian secret agent who provided an invaluable stream of information to the West until he was caught by the KGB and executed. In addition, numerous Soviet agents had also been flushed out in Western Europe.

It was therefore the task of Andropov to tighten security measures and, above all, stop the defection of Moscow's secret agents.

Undoubtedly, too, Brezhnev slept better at night, knowing that the KGB was in the hands of a man he selected, rather than in the hands of Khrushchev's choice from the ranks of the Komsomol.

But Andropov was in office only three months when Yuri Loginov, a Soviet spy who posed as a Canadian citizen, defected in South Africa. He was an important agent who confessed to espionage in 23 countries.

Then came another blow for which Andropov was held responsible. Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, eluded the KGB's widespread network and finally found asylum in the United States.

Runge Defection

But the greatest blow to Andropov's prestige was the recent defection in West Germany of Lieut. Col. Yevgeny Runge. Though probably not as important an agent as Col. Penkovsky, Runge operated for many years efficient KGB organizations in West Germany.

Runge is now in the United States undergoing interrogation by American intelligence officials. It was his defection, it is believed, that is the main reason for Andropov's plight.

Runge faced a problem in fleeing. The KGB usually holds a secret agent's family in hostage to prevent defections. But so sure was Andropov of Runge's loyalty that he permitted him to take his wife and son abroad.

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